

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, and receipt of a certified copy of the priority document submitted October 31, 2003.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's indication that the PTO/SB/08 form included with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on July 9, 2003 is missing. Applicants submit herewith a replacement PTO/SB/08 form for the Examiner to initial and return with the next action.

Status of the Application

Claims 1-20 are all the claims pending in the Application, as claims 7-20 are hereby added to more fully define the current invention. Claims 1-6 have been rejected.

Claims 1-6 and portions of the Specification are hereby amended in a clarifying manner. No estoppel is intended by these amendments.

Indefiniteness Rejection

The Examiner has rejected claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. This rejection is believed to now be moot in view of the amendments herein.

Anticipation Rejection

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *Kashiyama et al.* (US 6,533,600 B1; hereinafter "*Kashiyama*"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has alleged that *Kashiyama*'s male connector 70, stopper projection 72, female connector 50, elastic slider arm 62, slider 60 and the features shown in FIG. 5 correspond

to the recited “first connector,” “projection,” “second connector,” “elastic lock arm,” “fitting detection member” and “reduction member,” respectively.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that Examiner’s allegation of correspondence is incorrect, and that *Kashiyama* fails to disclose, teach or suggest all of the features of independent claim 1. It is clear that the recited “elastic lock arm” and “fitting detection member” are different elements, as claim 1 recites a connector that includes, *inter alia*,: (1) a “second connector” comprising an “elastic lock arm;” and (2) a “fitting detection member, mounted on the second connector so as to slide,” where the “fitting detection member is engaged with the elastic lock arm in a half fitting condition.”

In contrast, the portions of *Kashiyama* identified by the Examiner as corresponding to the recited “elastic lock arm” and “fitting detection member” are the same element. Specifically, *Kashiyama* clearly shows that elastic slider arm 62 is part of slider 60.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is patentable over the applied reference. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that rejected dependent claims 2-6 are allowable, *at least* by virtue of their dependency.

Additionally, Applicants respectfully submit that rejected dependent claims 2-6 are separately patentable over the applied reference.

For example, Applicants respectfully submit that *Kashiyama* fails to disclose, teach or suggest any reduction member that comprises “a recessed portion,” as recited in dependent claim 2.

Specifically, although the Examiner alleges that FIG. 5 shows the recited “recessed portion,” Applicants respectfully submit that no portion of stopper projection 72 in FIG. 5 exhibits any feature that could reasonably be compared to a “recess.” Rather, stopper projection 72 merely includes front, slanted side, top and rear surfaces 72a, 72b, 72c and 72d, respectively.

Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this rejection.

Obviousness Rejections

The Examiner has rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a): (1) claims 1, 2, 4 and 6 as being unpatentable over what the Examiner has called the “*admitted prior art*” in view of *Samejima et al.* (US 4,925,398; hereinafter “*Samejima*”); and (2) claims 1, 2, 5 and 6 as being unpatentable over what the Examiner has called the “*admitted prior art*” in view of *Nutzel* (US 4,925,398; hereinafter “*Nutzel*”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As an initial matter, Applicants note that the Figures 4 and 5 of the Application alleged to be admitted prior art by the Examiner are not “prior art.” Rather, Figures 4 and 5 are “related art,” and constitute only in-house technology of Yazaki Corporation.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the obviousness rejections are unsupported, and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw them.

New Claims

Claims 7-20 are hereby added. Claims 7-20 are fully supported *at least* by FIGS. 1-3 of the instant Application. Claims 7-20 are respectfully submitted to be allowable by virtue of the features recited therein.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-20 are allowable.
Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the application now is in condition for allowance with all of the claims 1-20.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees which may be required to maintain the pendency of this application, except for the Issue Fee, to our Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,



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23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: July 16, 2004